

Evolving Internal Organization Development

Evolving Internal Organization Development:

Moving Beyond the Ordinary

By

William J. Rothwell,
Megan Schwartz and
Behnam Bakhshandeh

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William J. Rothwell dedicates this book to his wife *Marcelina*, his daughter *Candice*, his son *Froilan*, his grandsons *Aden* and *Gabriel*, and his granddaughters *Freya* and *Lina*.

Megan S. Schwartz dedicates this book to her children, *Aaralyn*, *Arys*, and *Talon*, whose unwavering patience and endless love have been her greatest inspiration. This book is a tribute to their resilience, which drove her to pursue every goal with unwavering determination. She also thanks her co-authors for helping her bring the ideas shaped by her journey in Organization Development to life in this published book.

Behnam Bakhshandeh dedicates this book to his six grandchildren, *Gabriel*, *Becket*, *Darya*, *Emma*, *Nora*, and *Jack*.

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PREFACE

What is, and what should be, the role of the internal Organization Development (OD) practitioner inside organizations? How should organizations set up and launch an internal function/department focused on humanistic change? Answering those important questions shapes this book.

Many articles, books, conference talks, and webinars on OD traditionally focus on the role of the external OD consultant or practitioner. Seldom has the focus shifted to internal OD consultants/practitioners and the unique positions they hold in their organizations.

Little research has been done on internal OD and what distinguishes it from external OD. Little is known about such issues as:

- The backgrounds of internal OD practitioners
- The job descriptions of internal OD practitioners
- The size, staffing, and structure of internal OD departments
- The reporting relationship of internal OD departments on the organization chart
- The major assignments given to internal OD departments
- How OD departments are evaluated

The Background of the Book

Two of the three authors of this book have served as internal OD consultants as well as external OD consultants. The authors have spoken to others and realized that those tasked with launching internal OD departments often have little to no background on what to do—or how internal OD differs from external OD. This book is intended to help practitioners tasked with doing just that.

The Purpose of the Book

This book offers a systematic review of how to establish, manage, and evaluate an internal Organization Development department/function in any

organization. While some may argue that vast differences exist between practicing OD in businesses, government agencies, or nonprofit organizations, the authors of this book think that the similarities of internal OD practitioners are more alike than different regardless of the economic sector in which they practice.

The Target Audience for the Book

This book is written for anyone who seeks to set up, manage, and effectively operate an internal OD department or function. The book is written for:

- *OD practitioners* tasked to facilitate the implementation of an OD function or those working in internal OD departments;
- *Managers* and *workers* interested in setting up an internal OD department geared to managing change in humanistic ways that put people first rather than putting budgets, project goals, or cost savings first;
- *Teachers* or *professors* who instruct others about OD, organizational change, or change management; and
- *Consultants* who facilitate organizational change and who may work with internal OD consultants or practitioners.

The Organization of the Book

This book opens with this **Preface**, which is intended to summarize the book. An **Acknowledgments** page thanks to contributors. An **Advance Organizer** is designed to help readers assess which chapters they should focus on. The book is organized in four parts and eighteen chapters.

Part One is entitled "Internal Organization Development: The Basics." It consists of seven chapters. **Chapter 1** is called "What Are We Talking About? Defining Internal Organization Development." **Chapter 2** is "Does My Organization Need This? Benefits of Internal Organization Development." **Chapter 3** focuses on "Creating an OD Department." **Chapter 4** is about organizing the OD function and is thus called "What Does the OD Unit Look Like? Structuring an Internal Organization Development Service." **Chapter 5** is called "How Do I Find Internal Clients? Marketing Internal Organization Development." **Chapter 6**, "What is Your Capacity? The Internal Practitioner Role," concerns the competencies each OD practitioner must possess to perform effectively.

Chapter 7 centers on building trust and functioning within a unique corporate culture.

Part Two of the book consists of nine chapters. It is called "Practicing Organization Development on the Inside." **Chapter 8** is entitled "What Types of Requests Might an Internal Practitioner Get from the Organization?" **Chapter 9** is entitled "Who are the Champions? Finding a Sponsor for your Internal Organization Development." **Chapter 10** is about prescriptive and descriptive models for change. **Chapter 11** discusses the "Methods that Can be Employed in Internal Change Work." **Chapter 12** examines organizational leadership and how it affects internal change efforts. **Chapter 13** looks at dialogic and diagnostic mindsets. **Chapter 14** examines three positive and inspiring coaching frameworks. **Chapter 15** addresses a common question about appraising the effectiveness of the change intervention process and coaching.

Part Three of the book reviews special issues in internal Organization Development. **Chapter 16** is about power and politics that affect OD. **Chapter 17** is about assessing readiness for change, addressing resistance to change, and managing cynicism about change, and **Chapter 18** covers how "Internal OD Departments can Manage Whole Systems Transformation."

Part Four, the final part of this book, is presented in four appendices. **Appendix A** provides brief Organization Development Survey Data; **Appendix B** answers Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs); **Appendix C** provides resources to support internal OD practice; **Appendix D** lists OD and changes organizations offering valuable resources for internal OD practitioners. The book ends with **Biosketches of the Authors**.

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ADVANCE ORGANIZER

Complete the following advance organizer before you read the book. Use it to help you assess what you most want to know about the role of the internal change agent/Organization Development practitioner.

The Organizer

Directions

Read each item in the organizer below. Spend about 10 minutes reflecting on your needs by completing the organizer. Be honest! Please consider how internal OD practitioners should engage with their organizations. Then, indicate whether you would like to develop yourself professionally in the role of an internal OD practitioner.

Use Table A.1 by indicating your level of knowledge on a Likert scale of 1-5, with 1 having little to no knowledge and 5 being very knowledgeable. When you finish, score and interpret the results using the instructions appearing at the end of the organizer. Then, be prepared to share your responses with others you know to help you think about what you want to learn about the role of the internal OD change agent the most. To learn more about one item below, refer to the number in the right column to find the chapter in which the subject is discussed.

Table A.1: *I Would Like to Develop Myself on:*

<i>I Would Like to Develop Myself on:</i>						
Level of knowledge No Knowledge, 1 to Knowledgeable, 5					The area of knowledge, understanding, and development	Book chapter in which the topic is covered
1	2	3	4	5		
					Defining internal Organization Development	One
					Supporting the benefits of internal Organization Development	Two
					Meeting the challenges of creating an internal OD department	Three
					Reviewing the organizational structure and placement of the OD function	Four
					Marketing to internal clients	Five
					Clarifying the role of the internal OD practitioner	Six
					Establishing trust and dealing with corporate culture issues	Seven
					Considering the range of requests an internal OD practitioner might receive from the organization	Eight
					Finding change sponsors and champions for OD	Nine
					Reviewing descriptive and prescriptive models to guide change	Ten
					Applying various methods to internal change work	Eleven

					Exploring the impact of organizational leadership on change efforts	Twelve
					Reviewing the dialogic and diagnostic mindsets	Thirteen
					Understanding positive and inspiring coaching frameworks	Fourteen
					Determining the effectiveness of change projects	Fifteen
					Reviewing the role of power and politics in internal OD change efforts	Sixteen
					Assessing readiness for change, addressing resistance to change, and managing cynicism about change	Seventeen
					Understanding how internal OD departments manage whole systems transformation	Eighteen
					The subtotal of each column on the left	
Total					The total of all five subtotals	

Scoring and Interpreting the Organizer

Give yourself 1 to 5 points for each item listed above. Total the points from the numbers column and place the sum in the line opposite to the word TOTAL above. Then interpret your score:

Score

- **1-45 points** = Congratulations! This book is just what you need. Read the chapters you marked as 2 or 1.
- **46-60 points** = You have great skills in *internal OD* already, but you also have areas where you could develop professionally. Read the chapters you marked as 2 or 1.
- **61-75 points** = You have skills in *internal OD*, but you could still benefit from building skills in selected areas.
- **76-95 points** = You believe you need little development in *internal OD*. Ask others—such as mentors—to see if they agree.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Because of the dynamic nature of the current business environment, companies are always looking for new methods to adapt, innovate, and succeed to remain competitive. Consequently, an important area known as Organization Development (OD) has emerged due to this demand. At its foundation, OD is a systematic strategy to enhance an organization's efficiency by implementing predetermined interventions and methods. On the other hand, traditional OD frequently focuses on external changes, such as mergers, restructuring, or the use of new technology. Although traditional approaches are extremely important, they have the potential to ignore the significant influence of internal change, which refers to alterations that start inside the fundamental fabric and culture of the business.

Over the course of history, many authors and specialists in the field of Organization Development have assumed that OD practice is comparable for both internal and external OD practitioners. Technical competence, dedication to assisting their customers, and confidence in the industry's values and principles are all things brought to the table by both internal and external candidates. When it comes to the internal practice of OD, however, the setting and atmosphere of the practice as an employee of the firm produces various needs, benefits, and obstacles overall. This book examines the differences between internal and external OD practitioners, identifies the benefits of practicing internal OD, discusses the organizational context in which internal OD practitioners operate, takes into consideration the competencies that are required of internal practitioners, and provides distinctions between the practice and partnership of internal and external OD practitioners.

Enhancing performance, fostering improvement, and providing support for the entire organization's integrated effectiveness are all outcomes supported by OD. Since the beginning of Organization Development, the OD practitioner has been seen to bring value to the table. A viewpoint or strategy not included in the system is referred to as an outsider perspective. Acting from an outsider's viewpoint is more difficult for an internal OD practitioner than for an external one. As the uninvested outsider, the external practitioner can provide OD services, which have the potential to bring about major

change and tackle structures, practices, norms, and values. Sometimes, CEOs looking to improve their organization assume that they can handle the change independently without the support of an OD practitioner. Those who hold this opinion do not consider OD an essential component of the organization's success and efficiency. Leaders who recognize the importance of OD typically have prior experience or have reorganized the need for help in a significant change movement. It is possible that they may conclude that an internal OD function or the utilization of a current internal OD practitioner will boost their capacity to implement change and improvement effectively.

Evolving Internal Organization Development: Moving Beyond the Ordinary investigates the capability of internal OD to bring about providing access and facilitating change and transformation in individuals, teams, departments, and the organization as a whole by surfacing problems from clients, getting client agreement on problems, solutions, action plans, and metrics. This book explores the concept that meaningful and long-lasting change emerges from inside the company itself, driven by the organization's people, culture, and internal processes. It is not enough to just respond to demands from the outside world; rather, the objective is to build an organizational ethos that is proactive, resilient, and adaptable.

Because it emphasizes the significance of self-awareness, internal alignment, and intrinsic motivation, the notion of internal OD challenges conventional techniques. Doing so calls for a move away from perceiving change as a sequence of external activities and toward understanding it as a continuous, dynamic process that integrates intimately with the underlying values and identity of the company.

Since it was first established in the middle of the 20th century, the field of practice and development has undergone substantial evolution. Initially, OD evolved from a mix of management techniques, sociology, and psychology with the goal of enhancing the performance of organizations and the well-being of their employees. Foundational ideas like action research, Theory X, and Theory Y were developed by pioneers such as Kurt Lewin and Douglas McGregor. These theories highlighted the significance of human behavior in organizational settings.

In the ensuing decades, OD developed to incorporate a variety of approaches and interventions, including the development of leadership, the formation of teams, and the implementation of large-scale change efforts. These strategies have shown themselves to be quite helpful in assisting

firms in overcoming difficult problems and accomplishing their strategic objectives. On the other hand, the emphasis has frequently been placed on external forces responsible for pushing change, such as market circumstances, technical breakthroughs, and competitive pressures. Even while conventional OD approaches have been successful, many businesses struggle to maintain change over the long term. The reason for this is in part due to the fact that external changes, while being essential, are not adequate on their own. The organization's people must absorb the change to be firmly embedded and long-lasting. This necessitates concentrating on internal OD, which emphasizes cultivating the internal capabilities and culture essential for ongoing improvement and adaptability.

A new paradigm for OD is proposed in the *Evolving Internal Organization Development: Moving Beyond the Ordinary*. This new paradigm blends both external and internal techniques to establish a model for organizational change that is comprehensive and durable. By focusing on elements of internal development practices, organizations can construct a solid foundation that sustains external activities and enables them to prosper in an environment that is both complicated and unpredictable.

This book presents an in-depth analysis of internal OD, including ideas, techniques, and case studies that show its use and the benefits it offers businesses. It is intended for leaders, managers, and OD practitioners who are dedicated to cultivating a culture inside their organizations that is both robust and adaptable. Readers will learn how to transcend traditional boundaries and embrace a more integrated and dynamic approach to organizational growth as they make their way through this adventure.

We will dig into the ideas and methods of internal OD in the following chapters. We are going to investigate how companies may utilize their internal potential to generate change that is both meaningful and long-lasting. Through our collective efforts, we will explore the revolutionary potential of change from the inside out.

PART ONE

INTERNAL ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT: THE BASICS

Part One addresses the basics of internal OD. This section begins by defining internal OD, understanding the need for and benefits of having an internal OD department, and explaining how to start an internal OD department from within.

Chapter One: What Are We Talking About? Defining Internal Organization Development

This chapter will introduce readers to OD from a broad, high-level viewpoint. Readers will be introduced to basic OD fundamentals and foundations while highlighting and comparing internal versus external OD. This chapter will also identify strategic versus tactical internal OD and who the OD practitioner reports to, such as the CEO, the VP of HR, and others.

Chapter Two: Does My Organization Need This? Benefits of Internal Organization Development

This chapter will explore internal OD, addressing questions such as why an organization needs an OD department and what precisely an OD department can do for an organization. This chapter will also identify potential business problems or struggles that benefit from a holistic OD approach, including retention and turnover, culture and trust, and performance management.

Chapter Three: Creating an OD Department

This chapter will introduce readers to the creation of an internal OD department. Topics such as business proposal plans and piloting an OD on the inside to gain support from leadership will be discussed. This chapter will also outline basic, practical steps and suggestions for proposing an OD department within your organization.

Chapter Four: What Does the OD Unit Look Like? Structuring an Internal Organization Development Service

You may have the go-ahead to practice OD initiatives, but the logistics may not have occurred to you. How will the department be staffed? What will the budget for projects look like? Who will pick the projects, and how will they be prioritized? How do you organize your department, information, projects, and data? This chapter will help address these questions.

Chapter Five: How Do I Find Internal Clients? Marketing Internal Organization Development

How do you market an internal OD department and gain buy-in from leadership and employees? This aspect is critical for building trust and relationships to sustain change. Much is written about marketing for external OD, but little addresses the need for internal marketing. This chapter will uncover the importance of marketing OD on the inside while suggesting practical applications. Marketing OD is critical to internal departments, new or pre-existing, and to those who function as a practitioner on the inside.

Chapter Six: What is Your Capacity? The Internal Practitioner Role

What competencies and skills should the internal OD practitioner have? In many organizations, some individuals are inclined to work well with change and improvement projects. They may serve in various jobs and operate in a consulting role. Does an internal practitioner have to have a degree in OD, management theory, or quality management? Over time, the internal practitioner will likely need to develop skills to meet client demand.

Chapter Seven: Are You Authentic and Believable? Internal Trust and Culture

Does your organization have a toxic culture, or is the culture positive and uplifting? Does culture promote a healthy work environment or one of stress? In this chapter, we will look at the impact of trust and culture on an internal OD department and the importance of trust and psychological safety when practicing inside.

CHAPTER ONE

WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT? DEFINING INTERNAL ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Vignette

When I began working in a wholly owned subsidiary of a multinational company, I was challenged to help several divisions undertake job reengineering projects. In one case, the division vice president wanted to form self-directed work teams to maximize productivity and reduce the time workers said, “I shouldn’t have to do that work task since it is not in my job description.”

As a recent hire in the HR department, my responsibilities included employee relations, recruiting, training, and other miscellaneous tasks. I also had to assist the division vice president in his work. I ultimately became an internal Organization Development (OD) practitioner due to the relationship that developed between my training job and the operational division’s needs.

I asked the division vice president, “Why don’t you use Organization Development in your change effort?” As an accountant (a CPA), he said, “What are you talking about?” He had never heard of OD.

I said, “Well, you could simply announce to workers that it is no longer appropriate to use the tired old phrase ‘that’s not in my job description.’ That might work. But I doubt it. You need their buy-in and ownership to make change happen—and make it sustainable. That’s why I suggested OD. To give it to you in a nutshell, we would have to involve your managers, supervisors, and workers and give them a voice in crafting the change you wish to create. It might not end up exactly how you envisioned, but it would work and last.”

“All 300?” he asked, his eyebrow raised and his tone of voice reflecting that he was mildly incredulous.

“Yes, all 300,” I responded.

“That will take too long,” he said. “I need this solution in place yesterday. I have already budgeted for moving desks and walls to form new work cells. I already have a work order in to move the computers.”

“OD can move very fast,” I replied. “People sometimes think applying democracy in the workplace will take too long and look chaotic. While the application of OD might look chaotic, it will lead to sustainable change. And that is what we mean by corporate culture change. It does not have to take too long. Technology provides software that can involve thousands of people in real-time decision-making. It is just a question of how to apply that technology. Involving so many people quickly can be—and has been—done. It has been used successfully everywhere, not just in the US. It has even been used successfully with the unique cultures of the indigenous people of Alaska (Eskimos), New Zealand (Maori), Australia (bushmen), and Africa (tribes).”

That vignette tells the story of how I was introduced to OD. And that was one of my first OD interventions. I shifted gears from the training director to the internal OD practitioner. I realized that training is a change effort that equips individuals with new knowledge, skills, and attitudes. However, OD is a change effort that helps groups of people adopt new ways of working together to achieve results. It assumes that the best experts for any organization are not outsiders but the people inside the organization. The real problem is that an organization’s people do not agree among themselves on problems, solutions, priorities, action plans, or evaluation measures and methods.

The role of the internal OD practitioner is different from that of an external OD practitioner. The fundamental difference is that internal OD practitioners remain in the organization over the course of a change effort they helped to facilitate. That is not always true of external OD practitioners. Internal OD practitioners must work within an existing command structure—an organization chart—while external OD practitioners often have the freedom to “jump levels” and work with others.

Introduction

What is Organization Development (OD)? How does it relate to change management (CM)? What is performance consulting (PC)? What is the difference between external OD practitioners and internal OD practitioners? This chapter will address these important questions.

Keywords: *Organization Development, transOrganization Development, internal OD practitioner, internal OD practitioner, change management, performance consulting*

Key Concepts

This chapter will cover these key concepts:

- OD is about a humanistic approach to bottom-up change.
- CM is about a project management approach to change and relies on a top-down approach.
- PC is the term used for expert consulting when applied to humans and is the opposite of OD.
- Two kinds of practitioners are commonly used in OD: external (outside the organization) and internal (inside the organization).
- External practitioners enter organizations with credibility from the outside (an expert is always someone from at least 50 miles away), more objectivity (because they are unaware of the corporate culture and internal politics), and are often “here today and gone tomorrow.”
- Internal practitioners are positioned within the organization. They should be there for the full duration of implementing a change effort. They have the advantages of having greater insight into the corporate culture, awareness of corporate politics, and being with the organization while implementing the change effort full-time.

What is Organization Development?

How is OD defined? What is the OD approach to change? This section answers these questions.

Organization Development is a change effort carried out in a participative way, involving those affected by the change, and that uses Kurt Lewin’s Action Research Model (ARM) as a key roadmap for the change (Rothwell, 2015b; Rothwell et al., 2015; Rothwell et al., 2016). While some OD change efforts, like coaching, can focus on individuals, most are geared toward

changing groups, entire organizations, communities, industries, nations, or the world. When humans reach other planets, OD may someday apply to interplanetary issues. It can be most helpful in social change, what some call *transOrganization Development* (Rothwell et al., 2024).

First, OD focuses on group change. It differs from other change efforts, like training, which are directed toward changing individuals. Like training, however, OD seeks to bring about change by equipping people with new knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Unlike training, however, OD often aims to create a new organizational culture and to help individuals work in groups more effectively (Rothwell et al., 2021; Rothwell & Park, 2021). *Culture* can be understood to mean the often unarticulated, taken-for-granted expectations of people in organizations about the right way to do things. It is rare for training to bring about the kind of cultural change that OD programs do because training changes individuals one at a time rather than the critical mass (enough people at one time).

Second, OD usually focuses on long-term change. It differs from training, which seeks short-term change by giving people new knowledge and skills they can apply immediately to their jobs. Unlike training, however, OD focuses on changing groups or organizations. Since groups and organizations simply take longer to change than individuals do, OD efforts are often necessarily long-term. Some authorities have estimated, for instance, that to install a large-scale change in a major corporation, periods of 4-6 years should not be considered unusual. The more radical the change attempt and the larger the group or organization undergoing the change, the longer it will take.

Third, OD often relies on assistance from external practitioners. An external practitioner is someone from outside the immediate area where the change occurs and whose role is to facilitate, rather than direct, the change effort. An external practitioner may, for instance, be hired from outside the company. An external practitioner may be brought into the setting from another division, such as the human resources (HR) department. External practitioners who work in OD have a special name and are called *change agents* because they are agents of change. They facilitate (help) but do not lead the change.

Fourth, OD is inherently participative in nature. Individuals in the group or organization needing change are actively involved in decision-making in all phases of the change process, and that approach is introduced to managers to gain their support (Rothwell, Park, & Lee, 2017; Rothwell et al., 2023).

Often, the individuals targeted for change define and frame the problems calling for change (Rothwell, Stopper, & Myers, 2017), agree on the problems, define and frame the solutions that can be implemented to solve the problems, identify their metrics by which to measure change (Rothwell & Jones, 2017), devise their action plan for installing the change, take active roles in the installation of the change effort, and play a major role in evaluating results.

The OD Approach to Change: The Action Research Model

What is the OD approach to change? The answer can be found in the traditional Kurt Lewin Action Research Model (ARM), one governing model for OD shown in Figure 1.1. (It is not the only model but one commonly referenced model.)

Figure 1.1: *Action Research Model*



Note: Adapted from Rothwell et al. (2021).

The first step in the ARM is to recognize an organizational problem. No change can occur until someone—a CEO, a senior manager, or someone else—acknowledges that a change is necessary. The manager who asks for help from a practitioner is called the sponsor. Take the case of XYZ company. The VP of HR knew the company was plagued by too much

turnover. Employees would not stay in the company. So, he became a sponsor for an OD effort.

The second step in the ARM is to hire a practitioner. Most managers are familiar with practitioners. However, to be qualified in OD, a practitioner must have special qualifications to know how to deal with the *process of change* rather than *offer expert opinions* based on credentials in a special area. The OD practitioner is an expert in group process- how group members interact to achieve results- rather than in a subject area, such as management or accounting.

In the example, XYZ company's VP of HR hired a full-time internal OD practitioner to examine company turnover using the ARM.

The third step is to have the practitioner investigate the organization. If practitioners are hired from outside the organization, they must become familiar with what the organization does, how it is structured, and what people lead the organization. However, internal OD practitioners often also require some orientation/onboarding to the unique part of the organization they are to help.

In the example, the OD practitioner hired by XYZ company began by requesting information about the company even while the practitioner was on the phone with the VP of HR. He asked to see the organization chart, the company's annual report, any employee exit interview information, and the exact turnover statistics for the company and its industry. He received those to review before arriving at XYZ company.

The fourth step of the ARM is to have the practitioner collect information about the problem from the stakeholders. Unlike the earlier step in which the practitioner collected information about the organization, now the practitioner focuses on gathering the perceptions of key managers, workers, and even customers, suppliers, or distributors about the problem. The information should be gathered from individuals rather than from many people at once.

In this example, practitioner George Smithson was hired to work at XYZ company and began interviewing many people. He talked to the VP of HR, the VP of manufacturing, and supervisors and workers in the company. He asked the same questions in all interviews to compare the results.

In OD, practitioners listen to what stakeholders say about the problem(s) confronting the organization. But they do not mindlessly accept what managers say. One reason is that managers often confuse symptoms or consequences with root causes. For example, George Smithson was brought into the company to deal with turnover. However, turnover is a symptom of another *underlying cause(s)* called *root cause(s)*. Internal OD practitioners seek to gather information on root causes rather than present problems, which is the term used to describe the symptoms that prompted managers to ask for consulting help. Here, turnover is the presenting problem; what causes the turnover is the root cause (Rarely is a symptom traceable to a single cause alone.)

The fifth step in the ARM is to give feedback about the problem to the stakeholders. The practitioners summarize and present what they have learned to those who provided information. That includes not just managers but also workers who supplied information. One typical result of this step is that people react with shock. (It is an example of what psychologists call cognitive dissonance.) The managers and workers are surprised by how many opinions exist about the problem. These differences of opinion drive change since they shock managers and workers into realizing how much opinions vary on the subject.

In the example, practitioner George Smithson compiled the information he had received during the interviews. He heard that XYZ's company turnover was a problem. He also heard from the managers and workers a range of causes for it--including low salaries and authoritarian management practices. He then briefed the VP of HR about what he had learned from the interviews, though George Smithson was careful not to name specific people he had interviewed. After that, he scheduled a meeting with everyone he interviewed and other interested people. After presenting the group with a comprehensive report on his findings, he asked them to vote on the most important causes of the turnover. As expected, they were surprised by the many differences of opinion about the causes of the problem.

The sixth step in the ARM is to agree on the problem. Working with all stakeholders, the OD practitioner focuses on gaining agreement about the problem, what causes it, how important it is, and what will happen if the problem is left unsolved.

In the example, George Smithson worked with the group he briefed to agree on the nature of the problem, its cause, and its priority to the organization. By the time he left the meeting, he had a clear sense of the problem as the

group saw it. Group members had reached some level of shared understanding about the problem.

The seventh step in the ARM is to have the practitioner collect information about the solution from the stakeholders. In this step, the practitioner gathers the perceptions of key managers, workers, and even customers, suppliers, or distributors about ways to solve the problem. (If they are clueless about solutions, the practitioner can guide the organization's representatives through literature reviews and benchmarking studies to find out how other organizations solved similar problems.)

In the example, practitioner George Smithson interviewed the stakeholders again about the most appropriate solutions to the problem. Following the same procedure when he interviewed people about the problem, he interviewed people in XYZ company about possible solutions. As before, he asked the same questions in all interviews to compare the results.

The eighth step in the ARM is to provide stakeholders feedback about the solution. Practitioners summarize and present what they learned to those who provided information, including managers and workers. One typical result of this step is that people again react with shock. They are surprised by how many differences of opinion exist about the solution. In the example, practitioner George Smithson compiled the information he had received during the interviews. He heard the company should authorize a salary study, examine recruitment and selection practices, provide supervisory and management training to improve organizational leadership quality, and many other possible solutions. As before, he briefed the VP of HR about what he had learned from the interviews. He then scheduled a meeting with all the people he interviewed and a town hall meeting with other interested people. He gave the group a complete report on what he had found out.

The ninth step is to reach some level of agreement on the solution. Working with all the stakeholders, the OD practitioner focuses on reaching some agreement about the solution to the problem, why it addresses the cause of the problem, and why one solution is better than others.

The tenth step in the ARM is to have the practitioner collect information about the action plan to implement the solution from the stakeholders. This step works much like the earlier steps in collecting information about the problem and solutions.